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12. NEW NESTING SITE OF THE INDIAN WHITEBREASTED KINGFISHER *HALCYON SMYRNENSIS FUSCA* (BODDAERT)

The Indian whitebreasted kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis fusca* (Boddaert) has been reported to nest in a tunnel bored in the steep bank of a dry nullah or roadside cutting or in the side of a dry ditch, *kutcha* well or borrow-pit. The nest (a horizontal tunnel) size is given as c. 7 cm in diameter and from c. 50 cm to more than a metre long (HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1983).

On 24 April 1988 around 1430 hrs I saw a whitebreasted kingfisher coming out of a hole from a hay stack of paddy hay (c. 3.5 metres high) situated in the backyard of a house at Mayiladuthurai, Dist.

Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu). On examination of the hole I found four eggs of the whitebreasted kingfisher inside. The nest was a horizontal tunnel 10 cm in diameter and 41 cm long, and was situated c. 1.8 m from the ground. The nest was made of hay and no other foreign material except the eggs was found inside. Moreover I learnt that kingfishers had nested in similar haystacks at the same site during previous years also. The hay stack can therefore be considered as a new nesting site for the opportunistic whitebreasted kingfisher.

January 3, 1990

P. BALASUBRAMANIAN

13. FEEDING BY COMMON NIGHTJAR *CAPRIMULGUS ASIATICUS* AND INDIAN ROLLER *CORACIAS BENGHALENSIS* IN THE LIGHT OF MERCURY VAPOUR LAMPS

The common Indian nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* is the most abundant and widely distributed nightjar of India. On 29 March 1990 it was noticed feeding on insects attracted by the very bright light of mercury vapour lamps at power sub-station, Bhilai, located in fairly thickly populated area.

An Indian roller *Coracias benghalensis*, already on the hunt since dusk, was joined by a nightjar around 1900 hrs, which appeared with its characteristic almost soundless flight.

The feeding habits of Indian rollers have been described by Ali and Ripley (HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, 1983) as "the species has been generally noticed hunting during day time or till late

evening". However in this case, it was found hunting insects in the air, in very bright light till 2100 hrs. Similar instances of Indian roller feeding at lights have been recorded by me on 31 March 1989 (1830 hrs), 12 April 1989 (1900 hrs.), 4 July 1989 (1945 hrs), 22 April 1990 (2130 hrs) and on 8 April 1990 (2230 hrs). On most of these occasions it was feeding amongst a busy traffic area. Interestingly, black drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* was also foraging. The latter species has already been recorded feeding by the light of street lamps (Jamdar 1983, *JBNHS* 80: 218).

June 25, 1990

A. M. K. BHAROS

14. POSSIBLE OCCURRENCE OF THE GREY SHRIKE *LANIUS EXCUBITOR* LINN. IN ASSAM

On 8 February 1990 on the banks of the Brahmaputra river in Lakhimpur district of Assam, I

saw a shrike perched on a narrow branch on top of a hedge in the scrub jungle of the river bank. It was